



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

OFFICE OF STATE ETHICS

TESTIMONY PRESENTED BEFORE THE GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATION AND ELECTIONS COMMITTEE

March 9, 2012

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Senate Bill 340 – AAC THE USE BY STATE EMPLOYEES OF SERVICES PROVIDED BY CONNECTICUT TECHNICAL HIGH SCHOOL SYSTEM STUDENTS.

The Office of State Ethics ("OSE") respectfully requests that the following comments be considered concerning Raised Bill No. 340. The primary purpose of this bill is to permit public officials, state employees and their immediate family members to contract, outside of the normal bidding process, with the regional-technical school system for the provision of services by students that exceed one hundred dollars in value.

Although the OSE is not opposed to the concept of exempting contracts for student services performed in the context of vocational, technical or technological education, the current language should be strengthened to assure the citizens of the state of Connecticut that any such contracts obtained by public officials and state employees outside of the normal bidding process are without any preferential considerations and under the same terms made available to the general public. Despite established prohibitions imposed on public officials and state employees on the use of state office or position for financial benefit, it is not difficult to envision situations where even though a public official or state employee may be paying the same price for student services as any member of the public, he or she may still receive preferential treatment otherwise, e.g., availability of students, scheduling, etc.

Therefore, to assuage any concerns that the citizens of Connecticut may have, the OSE strongly recommends that the ability to contract for student services outside of the bidding process be based on the same terms as made available to the general public. The OSE believes that the proponents of the bill can achieve their policy goals without diluting the Code of Ethics for Public Officials.

Thank you for your consideration.